U.S. Department of Education
2011 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School

School Type (Public Schools): (Check all that apply, if any) ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Laurie Boske

Official School Name: Brownstone Intermediate School

School Mailing Address: 314 Main Street
Portland, CT 06480-1877

County: Middlesex State School Code Number: 1135

Telephone: (860) 342-6765 E-mail: lboske@bisportlandct.us

Fax: (860) 342-6766 Web URL: https://sites.google.com/a/theportlandct.us/portland-public-schools/

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Sally Doyen Superintendent e-mail: sdoyen@theportlandct.us

District Name: Portland District Phone: (860) 342-6790

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Christopher Phelps

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

11CT3

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2010-2011 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2005.

6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.

7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 3 Elementary schools
   (per district designation) 1 Middle/Junior high schools
   1 High schools
   0 K-12 schools
   5 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 11971

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	60	55	115
K	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	0	0	0
3	0	0	0		10	0	0	0
4	0	0	0		11	0	0	0
5	55	63	118		12	0	0	0
					Total in Applying School:			233

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 %	American Indian or Alaska Native
3 %	Asian
2 %	Black or African American
2 %	Hispanic or Latino
0 %	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
86 %	White
7 %	Two or more races
100 %	Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2009-2010 school year: 3%
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	2
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	4
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	6
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	233
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.03
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 0%
Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 0
Number of languages represented, not including English: 0
Specify languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 15%

   Total number of students who qualify: 34

   If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 7%

    Total number of students served: 16

    Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

4	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	5	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	5	Specific Learning Disability
0	Emotional Disturbance	2	Speech or Language Impairment
0	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	0	Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	Full-Time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	1	0
Classroom teachers	12	0
Special resource teachers/specialists	8	1
Paraprofessionals	6	0
Support staff	8	0
Total number	35	1

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 19:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only high schools need to supply graduation rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any student or teacher attendance rates under 95% and teacher turnover rates over 12% and fluctuations in graduation rates.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	97%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	98%	95%	93%	93%
Teacher turnover rate	8%	1%	8%	1%	1%
High school graduation rate	99%	99%	99%	99%	100%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

Our district does not collect daily teacher attendance data, nor teacher turnover rate. We collect absentee rate, so that was used to estimate teacher attendance. Over the past five years, we have had added one or two teachers to the staff, and had one transfer to another building. Moving one teacher out of 12 is about 8% of the staff.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____%
Enrolled in a community college	_____%
Enrolled in vocational training	_____%
Found employment	_____%
Military service	_____%
Other	_____%
Total	**0**%

PART III - SUMMARY

From the Great Depression to the Great Recession, our Brownstone Intermediate School building on Main Street in Portland has welcomed students each September for more than 75 years. When first opened in 1932, the building housed both Portland High School and Portland Junior High School. In the early 1960s our building became Portland Junior High School for grades 6-8. A new name, Portland Middle School, with the same grade configuration arrived in the early 1990s. In 2004 we became Brownstone Intermediate School, commonly known as BIS, one of less than a dozen grades 5 and 6 schools in Connecticut.

Our Brownstone Auditorium houses two huge murals painted by artist H.S. Barbour as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Depression. WPA artists were hired to paint scenes depicting local life in towns throughout the United States. Barbour's murals from the 1930s depict brownstone quarrying and shipbuilding – two industries that were essential to Portland's development.

Brownstone Intermediate School is a community dedicated to bridging the transition from elementary to middle school for our children. This intellectual, emotional, social, and physical transition is addressed through a multi-discipline team approach, with a focus on responsible behavior, outstanding character, and contributions to the school and community.

The staff at Brownstone Intermediate School nurtures a climate based on reflection, critical thinking, communication, risk-taking, and broadening horizons. We accomplish this through both curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Relationships with community organizations provide a variety of programs and activities where students can contribute and demonstrate their talents.

We offer a full curriculum of academic courses and unified arts. Technology is integrated across the curriculum as a learning and presentation tool. We give each student an opportunity to achieve his or her highest level of performance. Our children also know that our expectations for their success are set high.

Currently, Brownstone houses approximately 250 students in grades five and six. Fifteen percent of our students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Seven percent are identified with special needs. Grade five students are grouped in a traditional elementary structured classroom, working with primarily one teacher for the entire day. This is a slightly modified contained classroom model, except when students switch classes for science and social studies instruction only. Grade six follows a traditional middle school model where children have three- or four-teacher teams. They switch classes about every 42 minutes. All students receive instruction in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, along with a full Unified Arts program (Art, Music, Library, Computers, PE/Health, and Reading). All classes in both grades are heterogeneously grouped, except for sixth grade math instruction.

Brownstone provides a wide range of remedial supportive programs in Language Arts and Mathematics geared to the individual needs of the students. Some children are serviced one on one; others needs are met through small group instruction; and at times instruction is delivered to the entire class. Instruction might be delivered by certified staff or by a paraprofessional who is trained and overseen by a certified teacher.

Brownstone also provides a number of after school activities for our students. We offer an Art Club, Chess Club, Newspaper Club, Yearbook Club, Future Problem Solvers, Principal's Advisory Council, and Intramural Sports. One of our largest after school activities is our yearly school play, directed by an instructor from the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. On the average, 50-60 students are involved in acting, set design, and/or production. This year we will be performing a production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

We believe that our strengths lie in the ability to connect with our students and parents in the Brownstone community. Our class sizes average about 20 students, and we have six core teachers at each grade level. Smaller class sizes allow us to differentiate or individualize instruction as much as possible. Parents are actively involved with our school and teacher-parent contact is regular and often. We encourage parental involvement with children and staff.

Students may attend Brownstone for a short two years, but we quickly usher them into our community. In the fall, we hold a "Getting to Know You" field day, where students are placed in mixed-grade groups to participate in various team building activities (relay races, a human knot, parachute games, etc.). We have various building-wide activities which bring together our school as a community: "hat day" for The Heifer Project, "Crayons for Cancer" collections, and "Giving Week" donations for our local food pantry. One of our fifth grade students has been diagnosed with Leukemia this year, and we continue to design fund raising events for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center on her behalf.

Our staff views BIS as a solid stepping stone that gives our children the sure footing needed for middle and high school years. Brownstone presents a warm and caring atmosphere. Substitute teachers repeatedly request to work at Brownstone, and parents comment positively about their child's adjustment to the building at our November conferences. Our ultimate goal is that students move on from Brownstone Intermediate School as independent learners, collaborative problem solvers, responsible students, caring individuals, and contributing members to the Portland community.

1. Assessment Results:

Connecticut measures student academic progress with the Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMT). These tests are administered in March to all students in grades 3 through 8, assessing students in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. Science is tested each year in grades 5 and 8 only. Two alternative tests are available to students meeting specific special education criteria; the skills checklist and the MAS (Modified Assessment System). State and local district test results can be found at www.ctreports.com. Student scores are divided into the following categories (lowest to highest): Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Goal and Advanced. Students performing at or above the Proficient level meet NCLB requirements. Our district expectation is that students perform at or above the Goal level.

In each area tested, specific "strands" are identified. In reading, the strands are: Forming a General Understanding, Developing Interpretation, Making Reader/Text Connections, and Examining the Content and Structure. In Writing, the strands are Composing/Revising, and Editing. There are 25 strands identified in Math (for example: place value, time, probability and algebraic concepts).

Over the past five years, students at Brownstone Intermediate School demonstrated continuous improvement in performing at or above the Proficient level in both Reading and Math. In grade five Reading, students have gone from 87.7% to 92.2% at or above the Proficient level. In grade six Reading, students have gone from 88.9% to 94.8% at or above Proficient. In grade five Math, students have gone from 89.5% to 95.7% at or above Proficient. In grade six Math, students have gone from 95.4% to 98.3% at or above Proficient. We also have demonstrated continuous improvement in students reaching the advanced level.

We have a limited number of students in each sub group (Free and Reduced Lunch, Special Education, and Ethnicity). Because of our smaller size, we pride ourselves in personally knowing each of our students' strengths and areas of weakness, and every teacher makes an effort to meet those areas of need by modifying their instruction. For example, one sixth grade student reads at least two years below grade level expectations. The sixth grade language arts teacher collaborates with the special educator to design modifications that help improve this student's reading ability. The classroom teacher not only provides classroom modifications, but also meets with this student several days a week after school to reinforce the daily lessons on an individual basis. On the Connecticut Mastery Test over the past five years, 83% to 92% of our students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch have performed at or above the Proficient level in both grades in Reading and Math.

Stakeholders (Board of Education, parents, and local Government officials) tend to look at each grades' performance on the Connecticut Mastery Tests from year to year. At Brownstone, we focus on the "cohort" group and look at how each individual student improves from year to year. Our students attend Brownstone Intermediate for only two years, so we immediately identify areas of need and design instruction to meet those specific needs at the beginning of every school year. When teachers begin the year, they are provided the individual student test scores from the spring and use that data to group their students instructionally from day one. In September, we administer reading, writing, and math baseline assessments and rearrange grouping if necessary. Monthly writing prompts identify student progress and specific areas of need. Quarterly cumulative math assessments provide valuable information for teachers as they design their math instruction. We also administer the CARS (Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies) three times per year to determine progress in specific reading skills.

Our expectation at Brownstone Intermediate is that students will perform at or above the Goal level on all Connecticut Mastery Tests. Because our total school population averages around 250 each year, we are able to identify the individual students who need that extra "boost" to get from the Proficient to Goal level, and teachers focus their differentiation on those individual students. We differentiate Reading instruction by identifying specific reading skills from the CARS assessment, and create specific lessons

targeting those skills with identified students. In math, our quarterly math assessment results provide valuable information on how to differentiate our math lessons for specific students. Students are then grouped accordingly and provided the support in the needed areas.

We feel that our overall approach to assessments has been a significant factor in producing our excellent test results. Students understand that assessments are there to help teachers design instruction so that everyone can perform at their highest level. We do have a stronger instructional focus on the Connecticut Mastery Tests during the month of February, but during the other months of the school year we do not stress test results as our goal. With both students and parents, we stress that individual student progress is our goal, and the assessments are the means of measuring that progress. Student improvement is our continuous focus.

2. Using Assessment Results:

In addition to yearly State testing, Brownstone Intermediate School conducts periodic benchmark assessments and more frequent classroom-based assessments to improve student performance. In the area of Reading, we assess students three times a year using the CARS (Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies). This assessment measures knowledge of specific reading strategies such as summarization, sequencing, cause/effect, fact/opinion, author's purpose, and figurative language. Twice a year, students take the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) assessment, measuring how well students understand the surface meaning of what they read.

In writing, students respond to a monthly writing prompt that is holistically scored by two separate teachers. Individual scores are shared with the students, and they are provided specific instruction in the areas of weakness. Students also practice short-answer written responses in Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. They are then taught with a scoring rubric about what is required to create a properly elaborated short-answer.

In math, students are given a cumulative pre-assessment in September and a post- assessment in June. Students are also administered cumulative quarterly math assessments, and three times a year students take timed math facts tests. All of these assessments are aligned with the State Standards in each content area. Teachers review the test results with their students, and provide additional instruction when needed. At the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year our grade five teachers realized that their entering students presented a wider range of math ability based upon their grade four post assessment scores. As a result, the fifth grade team has determined that their goal for the year is to design differentiated math lessons. They meet on a regular basis, review the current math curriculum and design additional lessons providing instructional strategies for those students performing at, below, or above grade level.

After each benchmark assessment, teachers meet in grade level teams to discuss student results for all assessments. They look for common areas of need and adjust instruction accordingly. Teachers develop ways to integrate the areas of need into all content areas. For example, the "compare and contrast" skill is taught in Science when examining different types of rocks and in Social Studies, when students explore different cultures in Latin America. Students create a wire sculpture in their art classes, and submit a written description of their product, many of which are displayed in our town-wide student Art Show in May.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Communication with parents about all aspects of school life is vital at Brownstone Intermediate. During the first week of school, teachers send home a description of their individual grading policy. Classroom assessments are always sent home to parents, and teachers expect students to return below average tests to school after being signed by a parent, ensuring that the test has been reviewed at home. Student progress reports are sent home four times a year, between report card periods. These progress reports give parents a snapshot view of their child's progress. Report cards are sent home on a quarterly basis. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in November for every parent. We are adding an additional parent conference day in March for the 2010-2011 school year. In addition to the scheduled conference times, parents are

encouraged to contact their child's teacher any time they have a concern. Teachers have shared concerns with parents on an individual basis, as well as via phone or through email. A monthly newsletter is sent home to parents and frequently reviews grade level benchmark expectations and test results. Individual State CMT results are sent home to parents each summer, and parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have questions or concerns about their child's scores. Parents of students identified in need of Special Education or Section 504 services are invited to their yearly review of their child's academic program as required by law. Additional conferences are provided at the parents' request.

Students are informed about their academic progress on a daily basis. For example, writing prompts are returned to each student after scoring, and their teachers' conference individually and in groups about how students can improve their writing skills. Teachers review homework daily with their students and provide extra help during the school day and in after school study sessions.

The community learns about the performance of Brownstone students via weekly emails, Board of Education meetings, PTO meetings, and publications in the local newspapers. Again, we encourage all of our stakeholders to contact the school with any questions or concerns.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The Portland School District has a unique arrangement of grade levels. All students progress from grade to grade as a single unit. There is one school for grades PreK to two, one school for grades three and four, one for grades five and six (Brownstone Intermediate), and a secondary school complex housing grades seven through twelve (grades seven and eight are in a separate wing of the building). As a result, students deal with many building and teacher transitions. It is therefore essential that successful instructional strategies are shared between buildings.

Each school has developed a student summary sheet which follows the student from grade to grade. This sheet lists all district test results for each student. At Brownstone, special educators meet with their colleagues in the other schools at the beginning and end of each school year to discuss their incoming and outgoing students, and they share strategies that have met the needs of these students.

All schools in Portland participate in the SRBI (Strategic Research Based Intervention) process. This is Connecticut's version of RTI (Response to Intervention). Students in need of specific remediation are prescribed an instructional plan that follows the student from grade to grade. Portland Middle School has a program called ACES, for students in need of additional support. Throughout the school year, sixth grade teachers develop a list of students who might benefit from this program when they move up to the middle school. Near the end of the school year, a counselor from the middle school meets with the sixth grade team to discuss their recommendations.

Portland has created a district Professional Development Committee, comprised of instructors and administrators from all schools. This committee shares successes and concerns from each building, and develops appropriate professional development to meet the needs of the teachers. Over the past few years, teachers have been learning how to use individual student response systems ("clickers"). Teachers who excel at integrating these devices into their classroom lessons have provided professional develop for those needing additional training.

Portland is a member of a multi-district consortium. One focus of this consortium has been a multi-year training project in differentiation. Teachers from grades five and six participate in this project in the areas of Math, Science, and Language Arts. Brownstone teachers have met with teachers from many districts, sharing successful strategies for differentiation. Brownstone teachers in both grades are participating in a multi-year grant funded project entitled "Science Matters". This program is provided for teachers across the state in collaboration with Eastern Connecticut State University. Our teachers share their strategies for Science instruction, and have met with colleagues across the state to learn new ways to integrate non-fiction science reading into their daily curriculum.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Reading instruction at Brownstone Intermediate is holistic. We teach reading skills across our entire curriculum. Instruction is based on genre (fiction/non-fiction); reading ability; and the student's interest. Reading and writing go hand-in-hand. Throughout the year the teachers focus on several fiction and non-fiction reading strategies: predicting, visualizing, connecting, questioning, inferring, clarifying, summarizing, author's purpose, and text features and structures. In the area of writing, we teach expository and persuasive essays emphasizing organization, elaboration, and fluency. The use of proper mechanics is expected in all writing such as reading journal entries, written answers to questions, and free-writing. In other areas of language arts, children have regular spelling, vocabulary, and expository writing instruction. Again, like reading, writing skills are taught across the curriculum.

Most of the instructional reading time in grade five is centered on historical fiction titles related to the social studies curriculum, which covers American history. For example, the fifth grade has leveled historical fiction units on Native Americans; early colonial times; the American Revolution; Westward Expansion; and slavery/Civil War. We also have a multicultural unit that includes fiction and non-fiction titles. These groupings are differentiated and can range from third to seventh grade reading levels. The groupings are leveled and flexible, and based on data collected from a series of reading assessments and the student's interest. Our readers meet in whole class, small group, partner, and individual settings for instruction. Our social studies curriculum in grade six focuses on the United States and our neighbors: Canada and Latin America.

Brownstone has a focus on non-fiction reading, including targeted comprehension strategies. These strategies are used for current events (*Scholastic News*), Social Studies, and Science instruction. In Science, children use leveled books instead of a single-level text to allow for differentiation.

Each of the classroom teachers at Brownstone in fifth grade teaches math. Classrooms are heterogeneous, which allows teachers to provide flexible grouping (differentiation) by need. Our math curriculum in fifth grade is heavily weighted on both ends of the instructional scale: we emphasize mastery of basic facts and multi-stepped (and regularly collaborative) problem solving. Our curriculum, and the texts we use, takes their cues from state and national math standards. Teachers enhance their instruction with Smart Board technology, the use of our two computer labs, and manipulatives. We regularly link our math concepts with our Science curriculum.

Grade six Math is the first time where students are divided into two levels: a general level and an "accelerated" math group. Both groups follow the same curriculum based on State Standards, but the lower group proceeds at a slower pace, based upon the individual needs of the students in the group.

The four units of study in sixth grade science are: Matter and Energy in Ecosystems, Daily and Seasonal Weather Patterns, Constructive and Destructive Forces and Resulting Landforms, and Moving Water and the Products and Effects of Human Activities. Grade five students study Force and Motion, the Solar System, Electricity, and Weather. Students are taught using a variety of techniques and methodologies. Inquiry based activities play a key role in arousing student curiosity and inquisitiveness. Students are given the opportunity to use their particular learning styles to accomplish tasks and report results. The Smart Board teamed with the Internet provides the students with an understanding of content vocabulary and usage by providing animations and video clips to correlate and enhance note-taking and comprehension of the terms.

The Visual Arts curriculum at Brownstone Intermediate School ties into school and state standards. Students in fifth grade and sixth grade experience a wide variety of media and techniques. Some examples are, drawing with pencil, both oil and chalk pastel, blending with crayon, colored pencil, watercolor and tempera paint. Building with wire, clay, paper, paper Mache' and cardboard are areas of

form that are explored. Opportunities for both found objects and relief printing are offered. Close reflection of their work and that of their classmates is essential. Many of the art assessments are student driven. Math, science, writing, reading and history are all brought into the art program by incorporating them into each project.

Fifth-grade general music builds on students' earlier musical experiences in a Kodaly-based, Orff-inspired music curriculum. Students develop their general musicianship in many categories, including singing, playing instruments, reading music, making cultural connections, and performing as a large group in a first choral experience. In response to the fifth-grade study of American history, fifth-graders are introduced to American music which corresponds to the era which they study, including Revolutionary War-era music, Civil War-era music and especially African-American spirituals and their legacy.

Thirty-nine sixth grade students currently participate in the school's elective instrumental music program. Band members meet in small, like-instrument group lessons for one class period every six school days. The entire band rehearses together for one class period every three school day. Sixth grade band instruction is differentiated in several different ways. First, having small group lessons allows the instructor to modify the content as appropriate. Depending on their readiness, different students in the same lesson group may be practicing from different pages in their lesson book. Additionally, when students play the same musical example together, students at different readiness levels will be encouraged to take different approaches. For example; one student will be singing note names while demonstrating the correct fingering on the instrument, while another student will be asked to play or sing the example using dynamic contrast and/or articulation variation.

Our Physical Education program follows state guidelines and encourages daily activity, cooperation in group play, and healthy life choices. Our PE teacher also teaches our Health curriculum, which encompasses discussion of the body systems, nutrition, and a new unit on bullying.

2. Reading/English:

Reading at Brownstone is holistically taught. Students are progressing from the "learning to read" approach, to "reading to learn". We teach reading skills across all areas of our curriculum. Our reading program is a leveled mix of fiction and non-fiction titles in both grades. In grade five, reading is centered on historical fiction titles related to the social studies curriculum. Grade six selects titles based upon genre: survival theme novels, poetry, science fiction, and non-fiction. During reading instructional time, teachers focus on teaching reading strategies such as predicting, visualizing, connecting, questioning, inferring, clarifying, summarizing, and using text features. Students are also given a read-aloud time to improve fluency, and a nightly pleasure reading assignment to foster a love of independent reading.

Some of our students are still performing at the "learning to read" stage, and are reading below grade level expectations. These students are identified by classroom and district assessments. In addition to specific classroom groupings, these students are provided interventions through the SRBI (Strategic Research Based Intervention) process or through the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). These students are provided additional skill instruction in small groups or individually, using classroom materials and instructional software such as the DORA (Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment) program, "Read Naturally", and/or direct instruction using the "Corrective Reading" program.

Writing skills are taught throughout the curriculum. In Language Arts classes, teachers focus on improving students' ability to write persuasive and expository essays, and compose succinct responses to short-answer questions. Students also have regular spelling and vocabulary instruction. The use of proper writing mechanics is expected in all writing such as reading, math, and science journal entries, short answer questions on classroom tests, and free-writing. Students create a monthly writing prompt, which is then holistically scored in a range of 1 to 12. Students are expected to achieve the goal score of 8 or higher on these prompts.

3. Mathematics:

Brownstone's math curriculum follows state standards, using the Scott Foresman series in grade K - 6. Our math curriculum is heavily weighted on both ends of the instructional scale: we emphasize mastery of basic facts and multi-stepped (and regularly collaborative) problem solving. Our curriculum, and the texts we use, takes cues from state and national math standards. Some of the content taught in both grades five and six are: place value, computation with whole numbers and decimals, Algebraic reasoning, geometry and measurement, and probability and statistics.

Instruction is provided in whole class and small groups. All Math teachers at Brownstone use the interactive Smart Board on a daily basis to support their math lessons. Instruction is differentiated based upon student performance on regularly administered classroom assessments. Instructional strategies such as peer tutoring, student instructors, small group work, use of manipulatives, and "real life" projects are used during math instruction. Fifth grade students learn how to create graphs by developing a survey (for example: favorite snack at lunch), collecting data by asking the sixth graders, organizing the data and designing a chart using Microsoft Excel in our computer lab.

Parents are encouraged to work with their child at home by visiting various math websites recommended by the district. We ask them to practice the math facts with their child as often as possible. The students are tested three times a year for speed and accuracy, with a goal of 90% in four minutes for each of the operations.

Students who are performing below grade level in mathematics are provided support during and outside of the school day. During the day, students are placed in small groups for additional instruction, using individualized websites such as DOMA (Diagnostic Online Math Assessment), and other websites such as www.aaamath.com, and www.brainpop.com. Outside of the school day, identified sixth grade students participate in a "Math Academy" program sponsored by our local educational consortium, in collaboration with Middlesex Community College. Students attend classes at the college for 14 Saturdays, taught by local teachers and instructors from Middlesex Community College. This program not only combines math instruction with technology, it also fosters relationships between students of neighboring towns.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The four units of study in sixth grade science are: Matter and Energy in Ecosystems, Daily and Seasonal Weather Patterns, Constructive and Destructive Forces and Resulting Landforms, and Moving Water and the Products and Effects of Human Activities. Grade five students study Force and Motion, the Solar System, Electricity, and Weather. Students are taught using a variety of techniques and methodologies. Inquiry based activities play a key role in arousing student curiosity and inquisitiveness. Students are given the opportunity to use their particular learning styles to accomplish tasks and report results. An interdisciplinary approach is used to link Science with the other core academic areas.

Teachers work closely with our Library/Media staff to provide non-fiction reading for our students related to Science and Social Studies topics. In grade five, for example, students complete their first research paper on a topic related to the American Revolution. Each classroom has time with a library "cart" containing many resources on the topics they are researching. Students then work with their classroom teachers and Library/Media specialist to create a complete research paper following a given rubric. In grade six Social Studies students are creating a research paper about a famous Black American during Black History month. Our Library staff is an invaluable resource for this content area as well.

Technology is integrated into our daily lessons at Brownstone. The interactive Smart Board is used by every staff member multiple times a day. Students become an integral part of the lesson by using the technology along with the teachers. Not only do our students use the Smart Board during lessons, they also create their own projects using Power Point or Excel.

Part of our Mission at Brownstone Intermediate School is to nurture a climate based on reflection, critical thinking, communication, risk-taking, and broadening horizons. These collaborative research projects help us accomplish our mission

5. Instructional Methods:

Differentiation is provided in each classroom when needed. Teachers identify struggling students using classroom and district assessments. Students are then placed into groups based upon their individual performance. Students may be grouped by their interest, or by the type of instruction needed for success.

For example, a sixth grade Language Arts teacher was teaching how to use figurative language in a piece of writing. She administered a brief pre-assessment using a "clicker" system which immediately placed students into three groups: those needing direct instruction in the types/definitions of figurative language, those needing clarification in the correct use of the different types, and those who understood the meaning and use of figurative language. Each group was then given a specific task, and students were able to move from one group to the next, based upon their individual performance. Ultimately, each student was expected to create an independent piece of writing that used all six forms of figurative language taught. They were finally assessed by scoring their writing on the monthly district writing prompt.

In another Language Arts class, the theme of survival was taught using two different novels; "Peak" and "Hatchet". Students were selected for the book based upon their performance on district reading assessments. Each group worked on the same reading strategies (comprehension, prediction, comparing and contrasting) using the content of their specific novel. Whole class discussion was enlightening as each group shared how their author developed the survival theme.

In addition to grouping strategies, students with identified special needs may also receive a range of services within and outside of the classroom. These students may receive paraprofessional support inside the classroom, paraprofessional support in a small group in addition to classroom instruction, or direct instruction with alternative curriculum with the special educator. Parents, teachers, and special educators work collaboratively to determine which approach is best for student success.

Our primary goal is for all students to progress through the curriculum as efficiently as possible, making at least one year's growth during the academic school year.

6. Professional Development:

The professional development program in Portland is guided by the needs of the students and staff. The newly formed professional development committee, comprised of staff and administrators, meets regularly to define the professional development needs of each building. For example, our social studies curriculum in grade six was revised and was previously aligned with the grade six Language Arts program. Teachers were provided professional development time during the school year and during the summer to re-align Language Arts and Social Studies. Grade five teachers were finding inconsistency in their math cumulative assessment results. They are now using professional development time to closely examine math practices and materials for math differentiation. They are in the process of developing a math differentiation resource for their math curriculum, keeping in mind the State standards.

Technology has been a focus for professional development over the past few years. Our teachers were trained in the use of the "iRespond" student response system ("clickers") in the fall of 2010. Subsequent professional development days have been used for teachers to develop lessons in their content area that include the use of the clickers as a pre- or post-assessment. By integrating this technology into a daily lesson, teachers are able to quickly assess which students might need additional differentiation to master the skill.

In addition to building level professional development, teachers attend programs outside of the building. For the past two years, teachers in grade five have attended a summer institute sponsored by Eastern Connecticut State University on improving Science instruction in the elementary schools (both content

and process). We also have sixth grade teachers attending a local consortium project on differentiation of instruction. Two teachers attended the program last year for Math, and one teacher will be attending this year for Science. Teachers then share their knowledge with their colleagues at team meetings and faculty meetings.

7. School Leadership:

Brownstone Intermediate School is a community dedicated to the needs of children during the transition from elementary to middle school. These intellectual, emotional, social, and physical needs are addressed through a multi-discipline team approach, with a focus on responsible behavior, outstanding character, and contributions to the school and community. Every adult is responsible for the well being of our students. The Principal is considered the instructional leader of the building. She encourages teachers to take risks and try new methods and techniques. Our focus this year at faculty meetings is discussion and implementation of instructional strategies from the book, "Teach Like a Champion". Teachers read assigned chapters and practice the teaching strategies defined in the chapters. The strategies are discussed at subsequent faculty meetings. Teachers are expected to post their lesson objectives in their classrooms and refer to them on a daily basis, so that the students understand what is expected of them.

The Principal is a welcome member of every classroom and makes every effort to visit all classrooms on a daily basis. Students frequently visit the Principal's office to share their accomplishments. One student had to celebrate his improvement on his writing prompt from below goal to above goal by running to the office, reading his prompt aloud, and asking the Principal to call his mother to share the good news!

The Principal works with the School Leaders in the district to review the latest developments in curriculum and instruction, and provides opportunities for the staff to explore these options. All staff members are encouraged to frequently review their curriculum and offer different experiences for their students. Teachers have organized a yearly Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, and Career Day, all of which are now eagerly anticipated yearly events.

The Principal is not only the instructional leader of the building, but also the student disciplinarian. She is fair but firm with discipline, and ensures that all students have an opportunity to be heard.

The Principal maintains contact with parents with a weekly email message that may simply talk about school pictures or behavior on the playground, or deal with more serious issues such as bullying and internet dangers. Parents are notified about field trips, important tests, after school opportunities, and town activities. They are encouraged to offer suggestions and express their concerns at any time. Brownstone has developed a welcoming atmosphere for its students and parents, in part because of the collaborative environment encouraged by the instructional leader.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 5 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: 4th Generation Publisher: Connecticut State Board of Education

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
At or Above Proficient	96	95	90	89	90
Advanced	39	29	27	27	36
Number of students tested	115	121	105	139	105
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	1	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	2	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
At or Above Proficient	92	86	73	67	70
Advanced	7	7	7	13	0
Number of students tested	13	14	15	15	10
2. African American Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
At or Above Proficient			43	36	27
Advanced			0	0	9
Number of students tested			14	14	11
5. English Language Learner Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11CT3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: 4th Generation Publisher: Connecticut State Board of Education

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
At or Above Proficient	92	89	85	85	88
Advanced	40	25	16	27	27
Number of students tested	115	120	104	139	106
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	1	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	2	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
At or Above Proficient	84	71	73	67	70
Advanced	8	0	0	13	0
Number of students tested	13	14	15	15	10
2. African American Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
At or Above Proficient			31	50	27
Advanced			0	0	18
Number of students tested			13	14	11
5. English Language Learner Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11CT3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 6 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: 4th Generation Publisher: Connecticut State Board of Education

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
At or Above Proficient	98	95	92	94	95
Advanced	52	46	42	40	32
Number of students tested	116	100	134	108	108
Percent of total students tested	100	100	99	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	2	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
At or Above Proficient	100	75	67	85	81
Advanced	32	17	7	8	0
Number of students tested	19	12	15	13	16
2. African American Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
At or Above Proficient			40	50	
Advanced			0	10	
Number of students tested			15	10	
5. English Language Learner Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11CT3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 6 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: 4th Generation Publisher: Connecticut State Board of Education

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
At or Above Proficient	95	93	90	89	89
Advanced	44	28	36	37	34
Number of students tested	115	98	135	108	108
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	2	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
At or Above Proficient	84	83	67	69	69
Advanced	26	0	7	8	6
Number of students tested	19	12	15	13	16
2. African American Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
At or Above Proficient			60	50	
Advanced			0	10	
Number of students tested			15	10	
5. English Language Learner Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11CT3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
At or Above Proficient	97	95	91	92	93
Advanced	46	38	35	34	34
Number of students tested	231	221	239	247	213
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	3	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
At or Above Proficient	96	81	70	76	76
Advanced	20	12	7	10	0
Number of students tested	32	26	30	28	26
2. African American Students					
At or Above Proficient	100		50	78	
Advanced	10		13	61	
Number of students tested	11		10	14	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
At or Above Proficient	100				
Advanced	22				
Number of students tested	12				
4. Special Education Students					
At or Above Proficient	61	76	42	43	24
Advanced	0	0	0	5	5
Number of students tested	13	17	29	24	16
5. English Language Learner Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11CT3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
At or Above Proficient	94	91	88	87	89
Advanced	42	27	26	32	31
Number of students tested	230	218	239	247	214
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	3	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
At or Above Proficient	84	77	70	68	70
Advanced	17	0	4	11	3
Number of students tested	32	26	30	28	26
2. African American Students					
At or Above Proficient	82		54	74	
Advanced	9		0	10	
Number of students tested	11		10	14	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
At or Above Proficient	100				
Advanced	25				
Number of students tested	12				
4. Special Education Students					
At or Above Proficient	50	64	46	50	14
Advanced	0	7	0	5	9
Number of students tested	12	14	28	24	16
5. English Language Learner Students					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
At or Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11CT3